



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

Los Angeles man sentenced for attempting to ship sophisticated pressure sensors to Iran

LOS ANGELES – A Los Angeles man who admitted attempting to illegally ship high-tech pressure sensors to Iran in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) has been sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison.

Mohammad Fazeli, 27, was sentenced in federal court here this morning by U.S. District Judge George H. King. At the hearing, Judge King noted that Fazeli knew the prohibited items were destined for Iran and said he hoped the sentence would send a strong deterrent message.

Fazeli was arrested March 16 at his Los Angeles apartment by agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). In May, Fazeli pleaded guilty to a one-count information, admitting that he sought to illegally export more than 100 Honeywell pressure sensors. The sensors, which detect the pressure of liquid or gas, have a wide range of uses, including medical and military applications.

The investigation revealed that Fazeli ordered 103 pressure sensors in September 2004 through a website operated by an electronics company based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. According to the indictment, Fazeli told an unindicted co-conspirator that he had been contacted by a representative from that company advising him that he needed a license in order to export the devices. Despite that, after receiving the parts, Fazeli allegedly attempted to send them to the United Arab Emirates, with the understanding that the devices would ultimately be shipped to Iran.

“One of ICE’s top enforcement priorities is preventing terrorist groups and hostile nations from illegally obtaining U.S. military products and sensitive technology,” said Robert Schoch, special agent in charge for ICE investigations in Los Angeles. “Fortunately, in this instance, the devices never left the United States, but in the wrong hands, components like these could be potentially used to inflict harm upon America or its allies.”

Under the IEEPA, Iran has been subject to a trade embargo by the United States since the late 1970s. The Iranian Transactions Regulations expressly prohibit the sale, supply, or transshipment of any goods, technology, or services to Iran without prior authorization by the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control. Investigators say Fazeli had not received the required prior approval from the Treasury Department to export the pressure sensors.

ICE's Arms and Strategic Technology Investigations (ASTI) Unit is responsible for investigating the illegal export of U.S. military products and sensitive technology. In fiscal year 2005, ICE's ASTI Unit conducted more than 2,500 investigations into the illegal export of U.S. munitions and sensitive technology, resulting in 101 arrests, 70 indictments, and 86 convictions.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.